

The Increasing Land Access, Security, and Opportunities Act

Background

Access to affordable land is one of the top barriers that agricultural producers face. Secure land tenure is critical to providing producers with the certainty that they need to invest in and grow their operations. Strong pathways to land access are also directly connected to helping retain and transition land and knowledge within agricultural communities.

Responding to these needs is of critical importance for the success of young farmers, ranchers, and aquaculture producers. Further, if we do not respond to these needs, the health of our communities, the security of our food and agriculture systems, and our national security are at risk. The role that local and regional food systems play, especially in times of crisis, is undeniable.

Efforts are underway across the country, from creative financing models, market development and infrastructure work, cooperative ownership models, and more, to address land access issues.

To create lasting change, these efforts need policy support.

Solution

The *Increasing Land Access, Security, and Opportunities Act* would improve land access and tenure, as well as access to capital, markets, and technical assistance by helping producers start and grow viable farm businesses, retain access to land, and transition land. The bill would authorize this program at \$100 million per fiscal year.

Specifically, the bill would:

- Provide competitive funding to State and Tribal governments, non-profit service providers, community lending institutions, farmer cooperatives, and other eligible entities to strengthen land, capital, and market access outcomes for young and beginning farmers and historically underserved farmers, ranchers, and forest owners and for producers operating in high-poverty areas.
- Provide funds for services that help producers acquire land, cover closing costs and down payments, secure clear titles, make site improvements, and access training and technical assistance.
- Prioritize projects that give direct financial assistance to farmers, involve collaborative partnerships, and transition farmland from existing producers to the next generation.
- Establish a committee of stakeholders to develop a process for evaluating applications and distributing funds effectively.

The bill is led in the House by Reps. Budzinski (D-IL), Courtney (D-CT), and Nunn (R-IA).

The bill is endorsed by the National Young Farmers Coalition and the American Farmland Trust.